

What is claimed is:

- [Claim 1]** 1.A process for desilicating nonwood plant fibers comprising:
- (a) wet pre-pulping the nonwood plant fiber under controlled conditions of temperature, solids content , and pH;
 - (b) removing both suspended solids and dissolved solids from the fibrous portion of the pre-pulped material by filtration or dewatering, or filtration and dewatering;
 - (c) adding acid to the filtrate to force the precipitation of solubilized silicate; and
 - (d) removing the silica and other solids from the filtrate, and reusing the filtrate in the pre-pulping step.
- [Claim 2]** 2.The process of claim 1 wherein the resulting nonwood plant fibers can be subsequently pulped chemically and/or mechanically, then bleached.
- [Claim 3]** 3.The process of claim 1 wherein the precipitated silica is used as a raw material for other applications.
- [Claim 4]** 4.The process of claim 1 wherein the fiber is wet pre-pulped at a pH of about 7 to about 11.
- [Claim 5]** 5.The process of claim 1 wherein the fiber is wet pre-pulped at a temperature of about 50°C to about 90°C.
- [Claim 6]** 6.The process of claim 1 wherein the fiber is wet-prepulped to a solids content of about 0.5% solids to about 6.0% solids.

